

## **TOWARD MARRIAGE**

- ♡ Is your true soul mate somewhere out there? Definitely. Will you find him or her? I sure hope so.
- ♡ Will he or she be willing to tie the knot? That depends entirely upon YOU!
- ♡ Your choice of a spouse can make or break, delight or destroy you slowly, day by day, life-long.
- ♡ HOW can you safeguard your future marriage against divorce from the very beginning?
- ♡ HOW can you balance your courtship and your calling?
- ♡ HOW can you FIND that right person?
- ♡ HOW can you BE that right person?

### *About the Author*



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carries a strong burden for the healing and deliverance of individuals and nations. Her consuming passion is to help people find and fulfill their God-given potential and purpose. Her Biology studies and her training in Rhema Bible School, Youth With A Mission and different high-impact ministries worldwide gave her a broader world view and took her to almost 50 nations. Her language gift made her to minister with many world-renowned revival preachers from around the globe. Her ministry is attested with miracles, signs and wonders. She speaks in conferences, training programs and international TV channels and authored several relevant books. Together with her husband, Prophet Dr. Ezekiah Francis, she leads “Berachah Prophetic Ministries” in Chennai, India.



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**TOWARD MARRIAGE**



**Benita Francis Chemnitz**



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**Your Navigator to your Happy Haven**

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**TOWARD MARRIAGE - Your Navigator to your Happy Haven**  
*Benita Francis Chemnitz*

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# FOREWORD



**Is your true soul mate somewhere out there? Definitely!**

**Will you find him or her? I sure hope so.**

**Will he or she be willing to tie the knot? That depends entirely upon YOU!**

My heart hurts so much each time I hear of a precious young person getting married for all the wrong reasons - money, looks, education, nationality or nation of residence, cast or any other worldly, fleshly, soulish reason.

Invariably, things look wonderful and glamorous in the beginning, but after a short while, all begins to crumble and break down. Not only God's precious plan and calling upon two lives, but even the innocence and soft heart of both parties is spoiled for a lifetime (Heb.3:13).

PLEASE - study this book from beginning to end. Don't become one of these statistics! Have the courage to WAIT for God's BEST for your life. Don't settle for the second-best.

Does God want you married? Yes, definitely - unless He has given you a very clear word with many confirmations that He wants you to serve Him unmarried. That is the great exception, though.

Your right choice of a spouse is God's top priority. Don't worry. You don't need to choose all alone. Your loving Heavenly

Father has given you many ways to discern if a person is right for you or not. Plus He has also given you many ways to make sure that YOU ARE the person such a genius would be willing to marry.

Your God does NOT want you to try and fail. He does NOT want you to be hurt and heart-broken by trying and dying on the inside. He wants you to enjoy His Presence, His Eden-garden of pure delight, until He brings that perfect, tailor-made spouse for you that will just thrill you beyond imagination.

Look at Adam. He never even felt the need for a spouse. He was happy and busy in his God-given work. Your loving, caring God was the One who saw the need and took the initiative. He made Adam to sleep deeply while preparing the perfect match. So PLEASE DO relax! Don't run around, full of anxiety, trying to find that special person. Once God brings your spouse to you, like He Himself brought Eve to Adam, you will be just as overwhelmed as Adam was! Not only you - all your spiritual leaders and counselors will happily submit to God's revealed will if you just have a little patience and pray for them.

Marriage is of utmost importance in God's eyes. It has absolute top position in His list of priorities. That is why marriage was the very first thing God created for His man Adam after introducing him into the Garden of Eden. That is why only after Eve was created - and brought to Adam! -, God could finally say, "It was VERY good" (Ge.1:31).

Marriage is also of absolute top priority to our Lord Jesus. That is why He chose to reveal Himself and to do His very first miracle at a wedding (Jn.2).

Marriage is a main concern to God's wonderful Holy Spirit as well. That is why in His last message before 400 years of silence, God exhorted His Old Covenant people even twice to take heed to their spirit (Mal.2:15-16). From there, His Holy

Spirit would speak to them and teach them to avoid divorce, the thing God hates.

Unfortunately, marriage is also the top priority on the plan of attack of satan, God's and your arch enemy and adversary. That is why the very first thing he attacked in the Garden of Eden was the unity of purpose and the unity of heart Adam and Eve enjoyed (Ge.3).

The Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ came to die as a man to redeem us from sin. This includes the redemption of marriage back into God's original plan and purpose.

So please, don't be afraid to embark on the journey to marriage. Fear is one of satan's favorite tools, designed to make you waste your life and destroy your calling. Fear comes in different ways. There is the fear of ending up as an eternal spinster, laughed at and rejected by everyone. There is the fear of not being accepted in your circle of friends if you don't show up with a "date". There is the fear of not being able to provide for yourself if you don't have a spouse. There is the fear of getting too old to get anyone. There are many kinds of fear. I guess you know better than me...

Let me assure you. All these fears come straight from satan, the father of lies (Jn.8:44). He is too afraid of what you can and will do against him and his kingdom when you marry the right person. Don't forget: God is LOVE (1.Jn.4:8,16). He loves you and cares for you much more than you could ever care for yourself.

Don't succumb to fear and destroy your life! Remember, King Saul lost his entire kingdom because of fear, anxiety and his inability to wait for God's time (1.Sam.15)

Remember 1 John 4:18:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,

because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

So please, don't fear. Happily enjoy and use this special time of preparation for a great union that will glorify God in the NATIONS of the world!

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## OUR MARRIAGE

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***Let me begin this book with a picture of our own marriage.***

Very few people gave our marriage a good chance of success when we announced that God had spoken to us to get married. What was the reason? Let me tell you just a few of the difficulties we were facing.

For both of us, this is our first marriage. When we got married, I was in my mid-forties, my husband in his early fifties. Both of us had been happy, fulfilled and quite successful in our Christian lives and ministries. None of us had intended and much less petitioned the Lord to marry. We were both fully satisfied with Jesus and busily engaged in fulfilling His calling upon our lives.

I am a single child from a German upper middle class family. I had no other responsibilities than to make sure I studied well in school and later on in university.

My husband is the eldest son out of nine siblings in an Indian teachers' family. From his earliest childhood, he carried all the responsibilities of helping to parent his siblings, as per the habit in Asian culture. According to the Asian custom of arranged marriages, his responsibility went as far as selecting the marriage partners for his younger brother and all his seven sisters.

I come from Germany, a nation where independence is celebrated and taught from earliest childhood onwards and

where women have practically equal rights and opportunities as men.

My husband comes from India, a nation where women should not even go out on the street without a companion, preferably a male family member, and where the husband goes out for work and does even the shopping while the wife stays at home with the children. Up to date, many Indian women are kept illiterate, and seeing an Indian woman driving a car is still a curiosity that makes all heads turn and arouses many comments.

During and after my university studies I had traveled extensively. I had even lived with Christian families in different continents for periods of time, getting deeply involved with different cultures through my knowledge of seven languages. I had a nice circle of friends from different nations and didn't feel any lack in my life. I had my life made.

Although my husband had traveled to around 70 nations at the time of our marriage, his association had been mainly with Indian families of Christian faith around the world. He felt secure, being deeply rooted and grounded in the strong, beautiful setup of Indian family life.

Both of us had developed a lifestyle of our own, a lifestyle quite different from each other. According to human understanding, there was very little hope of this marriage ever succeeding.

Blending us together into a happy, fulfilled couple that by God's grace blesses singles, couples and families around the world is a divine miracle for which we give Him all the glory and honor.

Let me encourage you. No matter what your life looks like right now, Jesus can and desires to do the same for you. As our Lord Jesus Himself states,

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God (Lk.18:27)

There is hope for you to create a good marriage, full of love, romance, joy and excitement.

In this book you will find out how.

As in every area of life, a good preparation is vital also for the success of a marriage. We will explore what you can do beforehand to prepare for a "happily-ever-after" marriage.

Let us now take together the first and most important step towards victory.

## 2

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**THE ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION**


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Please pause and think for a moment. What is your reason for wanting to get married? What do you expect out of this marriage? Why would you be willing to take a step that changes the remainder of your life so drastically? Are you aware that marriage means giving up your identity as a single and accepting a new identity? You will henceforth be part of a completely new entity comprised of two individuals that are progressively blending together into one. Wow! Marriage is not just a ceremony. It is actually a very deep mystery, as the Apostle Paul so correctly says (Eph.5:32).

Let's face it. The reason why you are willing to take this step is that there is a deep longing for profound fellowship and perfect understanding in each and every human being. This desire is created by God Himself to draw us into a loving relationship with Him (Jer.31:3). Yet if this desire is not satisfied by a deep, loving, trusting and intimate relationship with our Creator, it will be misguided and projected onto human beings.

The tragedy is that no human being can really fully and deeply satisfy another human being's needs and desires. As somebody said, there is a GOD-shaped vacuum inside of each one of us. Expecting a human being to fill this vacuum is an impossible claim and amounts to idol worship.

The very first step toward a happy, fulfilled marriage is therefore the step into a happy, fulfilling relationship with your Creator. Once you allow Him to fulfill your deepest inner needs, you will have enough for you and plenty left over to give to your

spouse instead of sucking all the love and all the energy out of him or her.

If you desire a happy marriage, you must therefore lay down all selfishness and be willing to live for your spouse and children. That is only fully possible, though, if you have received into your heart the God who laid down His life for His friends and who is now freely sharing His powerful resurrection life with whoever will come to Him (Jn.3:16; 1.Jn.3:16; Jn.10:10; Jn.6:37).

So if you desire to leave your selfish lifestyle and receive forgiveness for your sin of selfishness, please pray with me right now:

**Dear Lord Jesus Christ,**

**Please forgive my selfish lifestyle and all my sins. Come into my heart and fill me with Your unselfish love. Be my Lord and my Savior from today onward.**

**Forgive me and heal every person that was hurt by my unloving attitude. From today onward, help me to receive Your love and freely share it with others.**

**Satan, I cut all ties with you. I don't want anything to do with you any longer. I have been bought with the precious Blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross of Calvary. Leave my life right now, in Jesus' Name!**

**I thank and praise You, Lord Jesus, for the new life You have bought for me. Please guide me by Your Spirit into all truth.**

**Amen!**

Hallelujah! Welcome into the family of God! Glory to God!



If you have prayed this prayer with me, a new life has started inside of you. God, the Creator of all humanity, has now become your very personal Father! See this truth from God's Word, the Bible:

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His Name:

13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (Jn. 1:12-13)

Please take out your Bible and read in it daily after asking God's precious Holy Spirit to explain to you what you read. Start out with these Scriptures that tell you that you are now a child of God: Romans 8:16-17; Romans 8:21; Philippians 2:14-15 and this wonderful Scripture:

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:1-2)

Hallelujah! Let this truth and this love of God sink deep down into your being. This is the first step toward your healing. Once you have been healed of inner hurts, wounds, traumata, rejections and the resulting fear of rejection, you will be able to live and love as God intended. Therefore, becoming a child of God and receiving God's nature and God's character into your heart is the first step towards the healing of your marriage.

Talk to God in prayer and listen for His answers. This is not just a religious routine or a recipe for a fixed prayer time during

the day. This is a 24-hours-a-day lifestyle. This is what it means to acknowledge the Lord in all your ways, and He promises to direct your path as you do so (Pr.3:6). You don't need to worry and to fight for your right anymore. He will perfect that which concerns you (Ps.138:8).

His wonderful Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth, even to the right marriage partner (Jn.16:13). Not only that - He is also the Oil of Joy and the Healing Balm for your existing marriage (Isa.61:1-3; Jer.8:22). Hallelujah! You are on the right track, on the way to victory! Rejoice!

Now of course, you must make very, very sure that the person you are considering to marry has also prayed such a prayer and really committed to fulfill God's will. Don't feel shy to ask if that person had a deep encounter with Jesus, seeks His counsel and hears His voice (Jn.10:27).

Being a nominal Christian is NOT enough!!! There must be a living relationship with God. Then only you can be sure that God and not satan will become your father-in-law!

Well, and what should be your attitude and priority if you desire an uplifting, happy and fulfilled marriage? Allow me to once again share my own testimony with you.

## A SPOUSE!!! FOR WHAT???

As I already shared with you, I was very busy for Jesus and fully satisfied with my life. This went on for many years. I was able to truly rejoice with those friends of mine who found and married the love of their life, but deep inside, I always knew that I didn't need that. I already HAD found the love of my life, and I was fully satisfied with His tender care. Since Jesus came into my life, I never felt lonely again. His Presence was and is the most precious treasure of my life.

Can you say that? Do you feel like that? Have you developed your relationship with Jesus to such an extent? You can. You should. And if you ever want to be happily married, you MUST!

The funny thing is that I had received prophecies telling me that I would marry, and pastors in different nations tried to somehow fan my interest and get me to marry someone they thought was fitting for me. I used to escape all these intents, rebuking them softly or sometimes a little more severely for their attempts. In one case, I even fled from a nation! I was very serious about keeping my Jesus first and foremost, and I was not willing to allow anyone to push me into anything God had not spoken to me about.

At times, however, I prayed to the Lord about a slowly increasing feeling that I had come to the end of what I could do for Him as a single woman. In my spirit, I started feeling that in order to fulfill the next level of God's call upon my life, I should have a husband as an authority over me. I actually expected that

after some time, the Lord would give me a husband for ministry's sake, just for me to be able to serve Him better. I never ever imagined there would be love in this marriage. All I expected was a work relationship for God's Kingdom.

Even for this feeling, I repented many times and asked God's forgiveness, telling Him, "Lord Jesus, I know You are more than enough for any job in Your Kingdom. You and I, we are majority anytime and anywhere! Please forgive me for thinking I need any human help to fulfill Your call on my life. I know I can do all things through You who strengthens me."

During all my single years, and in no way less now as a married woman, my heart, mind, soul and strength was and is fully directed onto God and His Kingdom. I never had any desire to make a name for myself, to have a family or descendants, or to be known or recognized for anything. Even having a nice house seemed to me just excess baggage and a bondage that could hinder me from serving Jesus. The one and only burning desire of my life was and is, "Lord Jesus, let Your Name be glorified in me and through me! Your Kingdom come, Your will be done!"

God honored this dedication in an astounding manner and gave me the best husband in the universe! Sorry, ladies... too late, the best one is already taken! Maybe you can still get the second best...?

No, no, don't worry, this is of course just a joke. If you obey God's wise counsel and delight yourself in Him, He will give you the desires of your heart, including the very best husband for your special character and emotional make-up (Ps.37:4).

As in everything else, the key to finding true blessing and happiness is obedience to God's Word:

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you

(Mt.6:33)

As you decide to love your Jesus with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength, your heart will be automatically directed into His will and plan for your life. Your loving Father God has a great desire to see you happy, and He knows that you can only be happy if you do what you were created to do.

Have you ever thought WHY God wants you to do His will? Is it because He is a cruel dictator? No way! It is because He knows what He created you for. He knows that His will is the only place and position where you will feel fulfilled and satisfied. Do you think He wants you to know His will? Oh, definitely!

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.

9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you (Ps.32:8-9)

Can you see it? He wants you to be very close to Him so He can easily guide and direct you into His perfect plan for your life! Wow! That's what I experienced, and that's my great desire for your life also.

Recently, however, we hear repeatedly of both men and women shunning back from marriage even after all the invitations have been sent out and all the wedding preparations concluded. What could be the reason?

# 4

## FEARS AND APPREHENSIONS

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Somebody put it this way:

**I am not scared of proposing a girl, but I am scared about what would happen if she agrees!**

As funny as this joke may sound, it bears a tragic truth. Nowadays, especially men shun away from a real commitment to a woman. There can be many reasons for this.

### Bad role models

One reason is a bad parental example and the resulting bad image of marriage. If your parents didn't have a happy marriage, there is a great probability that you will have deep fears and apprehensions about marriage that fight with your natural desire to have a loving spouse.

You need to consciously forgive your parents in the Name of Jesus for the damage their inability or unwillingness to love each other selflessly has created in your life.

Release them from your inner judgment. Renounce any inner vow you might have made like, "I will never behave like my parents," and the like. Such vows are the surest road to disaster. You will definitely become more and more like your parents until you repent for judging your parents and renounce your inner vow (Pr.20:20).

### Trauma from past abuse

Another reason is a trauma from abuse, be it sexual, physical, verbal or emotional. Maybe you experienced some painful treatment, some strong oppression and control or even sexual assaults in your past. Such things can stifle your ability to take initiative and to make decisions.

Here again, the key to your deliverance is forgiving your offender. By releasing him or her from your judgment, you open your own prison doors and can finally walk out into life and liberty. Praise be to Jesus for the power of forgiveness He offers to us so freely!

### Fear of getting hurt

Another ugly outgrowth of fear is what today's youth call "friends with benefits". It sounds so modern and so logical. People say, "Let's just be friends, with no strings attached. We don't expect anything from each other. We don't commit, we don't bind ourselves to the other person. We just enjoy a normal friendship, but we also have sex together. Since we don't get emotionally involved, there won't be any heartache if we break up, nor any jealousy if one of us finds one or more other 'friends' also."

Very often, such couples don't limit themselves to one boy and one girl. They might bring in one or more people, and the whole thing can develop into sex orgies like in ancient Rome - of course, mostly with lots of alcohol and drugs. Do you remember what happened to ancient Rome? Well, it was destroyed, exactly because of the decadence of its inhabitants! So is "friends with benefits" a good solution against the heartache of dating, mating and separating?

As easy as it may sound, let me tell you, it doesn't work. It simply cannot work because humans are created as emotional beings with a need to give and receive love, not just physical gratification.

I have seen many girls cry uncontrollably after falling or being pushed into this trap. In some cases, peer pressure forced them to show that they are "not from the stone ages", but modern girls. All too often, with the help of alcohol and even drugs, young people overcome their God-given inhibitions and try to "enjoy" - often even with multiple sex partners in their very first encounter. This may work for some time, since the Bible says that sin does create pleasure. Unfortunately, it is only a very fleeting pleasure with a lasting, deadly aftertaste (Heb.11:25; Ro.6:23).

Especially girls tend to get emotionally involved and suffer terribly when the boys keep their part of the deal and go on to other "friends". However, boys also suffer deep inner wounds by this practice and may become emotionally unable to deeply connect with their spouse once they get married. Hearts are broken, virginity is lost forever, unintended pregnancies create tremendous stress and health hazards - in short, the whole thing is a disaster.

Guess who might be the author of this new idea? You got it! Nobody else but satan, the author of deception, death and destruction, that somebody who wants to steal your life (Jn.8:44; 10:10)! This is just one more weapon he uses to kill, steal and destroy your precious life. How is it possible that even intelligent people fall into his trap? What is the attraction behind it? And what is the reason for this invention?

At its root lies the deep fear of trusting, opening up, giving and committing oneself to another human being. It is actually the fear of getting hurt that makes young and old try to not allow any emotions while still enjoying what God created for inside

the safe haven of commitment.

So the underlying reason for all of this is FEAR? Then tell me - who is the author of fear? Who is the spirit of fear? It is exactly the opposite to the wonderful Spirit of power, love and sound mind given to us by our loving Father God (2.Ti.1:7)! Who is God's opponent and exact opposite? You got it: satan, the father of lies, that cunning old serpent that deceives the whole world (Ge.3:1; Jn.8:44; Rev.12:9).

Trying not to get hurt, people cause and receive deeper hurts and wounds than they can fathom. Only time will show the seriousness of the resulting emotional wounds in their inability to love, trust, connect, forgive and nurture. I am convinced that many of those "friends with benefits" will end up as statistics in hospitals, psychiatric wards and even prisons.

What a tragedy! What a deception! What a slap into the face of our loving Creator who gave us His commandments not for His pleasure, but for our enjoyment in this life and for all eternity. Please never forget the importance of God's Word for your life:

For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this Word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess (Dt.32:47)

### **Financial fears**

There may still be many other reasons for shrinking back from marriage, like social, financial or career reasons. People prefer to just live together without getting married because they say,

**Marriage is grand - and divorce is at least 100 Grand (thousand dollar bills)!**

There is a truth in this. A divorce is costly, not only

financially, but also spiritually, emotionally, physically and even socially. Let me warn you here. Before you decide to marry, you should very seriously seek God's Word and God's will for your life and never be led by worldly, human reasoning. Take time to seek God in prayer and even fasting. Ask questions like,

- Is it God's will for me to marry?
- Is now God's time for me to marry?
- Is this God's person for me to marry?

Once you receive His Word and guidance, you can step out boldly, knowing that He who began a good work in you will complete it (Phil.1:6). If God spoke to you about this marriage, He will also strengthen you to make it a success (Heb.10:23; 11:11). Never forget:

He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it  
(1.Thes.5:24)

If God has called you into this marriage, He will work in both of you to will and to do for His good pleasure (Phil.2:13). If you enter a relationship and a marriage in obedience to Him, you will have His unlimited resources on your side for sure success!

Until then, please, for heaven's sake, wait! Don't go around looking, searching, dating and trying. Keep your eyes and your heart safe in God's ways (Pr.4:25; 23:26). As always, God's eternal Word gives us the very best advice, and He gives it even thrice so we will surely understand it:

I charge you, o daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles  
or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken  
love until it pleases (SS.2:7; 3:5; 8:4)

So please, don't play with love. It would only create great

pain and misery for everybody involved. Each time you break up an emotional relationship, your heart is ripped apart and bleeds. It then needs to create scar tissue just as your body would over an open wound. Have you ever noticed how hard scar tissue is? This is why the Bible clearly states that sin hardens the heart (Heb.3:13). Every hurt leaves a scar, and a scarred heart becomes hard. Such a person will be tough and callous. Think about it. How can you live a happy marriage with a hardened heart?

If you feel you are not ready for a lifelong commitment, please take time to pray and seek God. Don't create false hopes in another person and then run away when things become too close for you to feel comfortable.

You can even seek godly counsel and prayer help from your pastor to eradicate these fears from your life. Do everything in your power to prepare to be the best spouse this world has ever seen when your time comes. Your God will honor your obedience to His Word and reward you with the best spouse you could ever have imagined.

Never forget God's wise counsel:

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring  
the issues of life" (Pr.4:23)

## 5

**DESIRE TO TAKE REVENGE****Why does the black widow spider eat the male after intercourse? To stop the snorting before it even starts!**

There is another group of people, though. They are mostly men who were hurt by women, but even some women who have been deeply hurt by men and now want to take revenge on every man on this planet. Such people enjoy the thrill of flirting, playing around, feeling important, feeling loved and wanted. Some even converted the breaking of hearts into a kind of sport, a kind of competition. Among their party, they exchange stories of how they conquered this or that girl or boy and how they managed to get rid of them when they started feeling bored with them or threatened by their demand for a commitment.

Such people exist in every age group, so please be very careful not to involve yourself emotionally too deeply until you can be sure that person is ready for a life-long commitment. Why would you want to suffer the pain of heart break? Why would you want to throw away your virginity and violate God's design of blood covenant between one man and one woman?

Sadly, this hurt and revenge can be completely unconscious and unknown to that person, hidden deeply in the subconscious mind and often resulting from childhood traumata. Such a person doesn't even know why he or she simply gets bored or even starts to abhor the other person very soon after "conquering" him or her. In such cases, the offender himself suffers terribly from his or her inability to keep up a relationship and

stay in love with the same person for a longer time. The resulting heartbreak here is even worse, since the offender doesn't deliberately seek to hurt the other sex. Such a person is a prisoner of his or her own hurt and, like any hurt person, cannot but hurt others.

Please take some time to ask God's Holy Spirit to reveal your heart to you. If you have any hidden anger and desire for revenge in your heart, you need to repent. I know it was not your fault. I know the other person hurt you so deeply. But still, you allowed yourself to be hurt. You took the bait of the offense, and you are stuck. Don't you see that this old hurt is destroying not only your past, but also your present and even your future?

Honestly open up your heart before God. Don't shrink back from looking at that old hurt once again. This time you are no longer alone and full of fear. This time you look at it together with Jesus, the great Healer, Shepherd and Overseer of your soul (Ps.41:4; 1.Pe.2:25). Freely allow the tears to flow as He touches you and heals your deep inner wounds.

Most importantly, make a conscious decision to forgive the people who hurt you so deeply and made your heart hard and callous. Only by forgiving them, you can come out of that self-made emotional jail in which you were stuck for so many years. Please read Matthew chapter 18, verses 21-35 to help you take this decision that is so vital for every area of your life.

I know you probably feel you just can't forgive that person that hurt you so deeply. You feel it is not right for me to even ask you to forgive. You really want them to suffer and pay for the damage they did to you. Right?

Look at your Lord Jesus. Did He have such an attitude when He was hanging there on that bloody cross for you and for me? No way! He looked at His murderers with love and compassion. He could even pray for them! Wow! What did He pray? He said,

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Lk.23:34).

You can do it! You can release your feelings of anger and even your idea of justice. If it were for justice’s sake, you would also deserve death for your sins, no matter how just and faultless you may feel. God’s Word says,

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all (Jas.2:10)

Can you assure me that you never even stumbled in one single point of God’s law? I’m sure you can’t. God’s Word says,

23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Ro.3:23-24)

So how can you expect God to judge that person when He has so freely forgiven you of all your sins?

Take a decision to forgive today. This is the only way to healing and a happy marriage for you.

The key to your happiness is in your hand. Use it, in Jesus’ Name!

## 6

### GOD’S TIMING

**What do you prefer in a man - wealth, position, character or appearance? - Appearance - and the sooner the better.**

Unfortunately, this joke is all too true. Their deep inbuilt desire for intimacy can throw both men and women into deep despair. The urge to just “have somebody” can destroy more than just the physical innocence. It can destroy entire lives through wrong choices.

God doesn’t want you to suffer all the pain and heartache a wrong selection of spouse would bring into your life. Even in this area, His eternal principles apply:

4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass (Ps.37:4)

**You will only have a happy marriage if you have learned to be a happy single.** If you expect a spouse to make you happy, you are already set up for disaster.

#### Repenting time

Please understand: No human being can ever fully understand and fulfill you. This is something only your Creator can do, since He only knows every fiber of your being. If up to



now you expected happiness from your future or present spouse, the first step out of disaster is to repent. You are breaking many of God's commands, beginning with the very First Commandment itself:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex.20:2-3)

If you don't expect any- and everything you need first of all from your God but from any human being, you actually commit idolatry!

See the wonderful promise He gives you:

Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass (Ps.37:4-5)

Hallelujah!

### **Returning time**

Maybe you were like a sheep, going astray, running after love in all the wrong places. Don't worry.

You can right now repent and be set free from any wrong relationship which brought only damage to your soul and emotions. You can come back to your God who loves you with a pure, everlasting, completely unselfish love:

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1.Pe.2:25)

Let this be the song of your life. Celebrate every day the fact

that you have returned to Jesus Christ, the One who will take care of your soul and protect you from harm and hurts like nobody on this planet could do!

### **Waiting time**

Maybe you tried to trust God for some time, but your miracle took longer than you expected. Now the temptation to take your life into your own hands is again knocking at your door. What should you do during your waiting time?

My very best recipe and life motto is Mt.6:33: "But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Praise Him. Worship Him. Admire Him. Study His Word. The more you know Him, the more easily you will detect counterfeits. If you know Jesus, you won't fall for a man or woman who doesn't display His character. By knowing God, you will be automatically inoculated against evil.

### **Active time**

If loneliness keeps bothering you, ask Jesus whom you can bless at this very moment. Make a phone call or a visit. Bring some flowers or cookies to a hospital or senior citizens home. Ask who doesn't receive visitors. Share your little gift together with God's Word and a prayer for them. This is a practical, active way of obeying Matthew 6:33 - and all the other things SHALL be added unto you in His perfect time.

### **Trusting time**

Please, for heaven's sake, don't try to push or convince or

overpower God. Do you remember the people of Israel asking for a king? Do you remember God's broken heart when He had to understand that His people were not satisfied with His Presence, His guidance, and His Kingship? They just wanted to be "like all the nations" (1.Sa.8:5-9). God gave them their desire, although not without clearly warning them (1.Sa.8:10-22). You can read all throughout the Old Testament the great trouble and sorrow ungodly kings brought upon the entire nation.

I have seen tragic cases of sisters really pestering God, first for a husband, then for a child. In some cases, it really seemed to me like God was saying, "Ok, if you are so desperate, and if you really feel I am not enough for you, I will give you your desire." The horrible thing is that these sisters afterwards suffered just like the people of Israel did under their self-selected kings.

One pastor's daughter stormed heaven for a child. When she finally had the child, both her husband and her father-in-law died in a car crash. As a widow without a child, she might have had a slight hope of remarriage. With a child in Indian culture, however, she is doomed to live alone for the rest of her life.

Another sister insisted in marrying and having a child at the age of 46. She finally married a man who is around 20 years younger than her, and their child was born with Down syndrome. What an unnecessary suffering for the rest of their lives! What a waste of life-time and energy that could have been used for God's Kingdom work!

Dear brother, dear sister, let me give you the best counsel you can ever get. Of course, it is a counsel from God's Word, the owner's manual written by the very Manufacturer of your life. Where else could you expect to get the right counsel!?!?

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths (Pr.3:5-6)

You can fully entrust your soul to your faithful, loving Creator. You can keep doing good to others, no matter how much you may desire for your spouse to show up NOW itself (1.Pe.4:19). God will make sure that the right person makes his or her appearance at the right time. And since you are fully in tune with God and with His precious Holy Spirit, you will be walking in the spirit and not miss your opportunity. Glory to God!!!

### Compassion ministry time

There is a very interesting verse in Exodus 1:21. You probably know the story. Pharaoh, the cruel king of Egypt, had commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill every Hebrew male child and to let only the girl babies live. By this he hoped to weaken the nation of Israel. These two midwives, however, refused to murder the male children because they feared God. God appreciated this so much that He rewarded them in two beautiful ways.

First of all, for their heroic bravery in disobeying the most powerful person on earth at that time, He recorded their names in the Bible for the entire world to know for centuries to come (Ex.1:15)! Wow!

Think about it! What does our modern society do? How easily people decide to just "delete" or "erase" an unplanned child, as though an abortion were just a click on a computer keyboard! Women claim a right to their body, to their womb. They think they can just enjoy sex with anybody and murder a God-given life, a precious human being, in case they become

pregnant.

Oh, excuse me! I forgot... we are supposed to call it “embryo” or “fetus” or anything else that doesn't remind us of the fact that it is a very distinct, living human being from the very moment of conception!!!

How true is God's Word! How much the god of this world has blinded the eyes of the unbelievers (2.Co.4:4)! What an utter darkening of mind it is when people are convinced they have the right to murder a human being (Ro.1:16-2:11; Ex.20:13-14)!

The second reward with which God honored the commendable disobedience of these two midwives is found in Exodus 1:21:

21 And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.

Isn't this interesting? God didn't just provide husbands for them; He provided households for them! He provided a safe, secure, established living place and the possibility of having children inside the safe haven of marriage for those who protected others' innocent, defenseless babies from cruel murder, even though this murder seemed very reasonable and politically correct, the one and only option to secure their jobs and even their very lives. Wow...

Dear brother, dear sister, if you desire a happy marriage and a safe home, why not start out like these two wise midwives? Why not find ways to protect the underprivileged? Why not make God's heart cry for the orphans, the widows and the foreigners your own?

In my life, this is one of the secrets for the wonderful, joyful and spiritually fruitful household God has provided for me now.

From the very beginning of my real Christian life, I used to ask God to give me His heart burden for the salvation of the lost. Even though I was an extremely shy young woman, this burden compelled me to go to hospitals, senior citizens homes, orphanages, prisons and refugee homes to preach God's Word. Sometimes I would get infested with lice there - a truly traumatic experience for a German! Yet not even that could stop my zeal to help the underprivileged. The love of Christ compelled me to no longer live for myself, but for Him who died for us and rose again (2.Cor.5:14-15).

I went around the world to many extremely poor nations where I sometimes suffered for weeks without electricity or running water, at times even got amoeba or other diseases - just to bring the Good News of salvation to a suffering humanity. Preaching invitations from rich nations didn't excite me at all. I always preferred to go where the need was greatest.

I am very convinced that my determination not to obey our modern Pharaoh who wants to squeeze us into forced labor and make us ineffective for God's Kingdom is a major reason for all the blessings I enjoy now (Ex.1:8-14; 6:9; Ro.8:17).

Let me encourage you! It may sound difficult at the beginning, but once you start helping the poor, you will never want to stop.

You will be filled with heavenly joy and anointed with God's Holy Spirit for each task. Your joy and anointing will even increase with each rejection and persecution you suffer. Your reward will be great, both on this earth and also in heaven (Lk.15:1-10; 1.Pe.4:14; Mt.5:11-12).

So please, stop sitting around waiting and whining and complaining. Go out and find your harvest field, in Jesus' Name!

## GOD'S DESIGN

Well, and as you go out into your harvest field, eager and willing to help others, you might very well run across some possible candidates for marriage, as it happened to me and also to a very special Bible character named Ruth. How can you know if “he” qualifies for a good husband? How can you know if “she” qualifies for a good wife? Let us learn from Ruth’s story.

Ruth was a truly remarkable woman. When her husband, her brother-in-law and her father-in-law died, her mother-in-law Naomi decided to go back to her native Bethlehem. Naomi implored Ruth and her other daughter-in-law Orpah to return to their homes and find new husbands. Selflessly, she explained to them that she would not be able to provide husbands or any security for them. Naomi, this great example of a woman, practically put her own life at stake for her daughter-in-laws’ future.

In Western cultures, we don’t understand the depth of these verses. In Eastern cultures, however, even today the daughters-in-law have to serve their in-laws until their death. Having young, strong daughters-in-law with her was Naomi’s life insurance. She could send them out to work anytime when she was no longer able to provide for herself. Sending them away was a heroic proof of Naomi’s faith in her God. Orpah complied and left. What was the result? We never hear about her again.

Think about it. Have you ever met a woman called Orpah? I never have, in any of the fifty nations to which Jesus sent me up to now. Her name was just blotted out from under heaven.

Nobody talks about her, and if they do, it is in a negative sense. What was the reason? Orpah didn’t do anything bad, did she? She just obeyed her mother-in-law’s request to return to her own people, find a husband and have a family. That sounds very legitimate, doesn’t it? Even according to the New Testament, a widow is free to remarry (1.Cor.7:39).

So what was the problem? It was the fact that Orpah put her own needs first. She wanted to have a life like everybody else. She was even willing to go back and bow again to her old gods (Ru.1:15). Yet have you ever noticed in how many nations and languages the name “Ruth” is used? My own mother’s mom was called Ruth! O yes, it is true... God honors those who honor Him (1.Sa.2:30).

Yet what a warning for us! Did you know that many Christians, even born-again, Spirit-filled believers, fall prey to the temptation of turning back? What are the gods they return to? Well, they are spiritual forces like religions, but also things like the acceptance of society, comfort, a secure job, a steady income, the approval of people, a good education, and even things like a big house and a nice car.

Can you imagine that people can trade our wonderful salvation in Christ and such a loving, wonderful God like Jesus for such garbage? Let us better follow examples like these:

24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,

25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward (Heb.11:24-26)

Let us follow our great apostle Paul who after giving us the list of all his achievements and his best education, could say,

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (Phil.3:8)

Orpah succumbed to her own desires, went back and disappeared into oblivion. Ruth, however, vehemently refused to leave Naomi. She forgot about her own pain, her own widowhood, her own problems and her legitimate need to provide for her own future. Her heart was full of love and compassion for this bereaved, aged widow. She just couldn't bear letting her go home all alone, traveling without any assistance, back to a people nobody could predict how they would receive her. So Ruth strongly insisted in coming with Naomi. See her beautiful words of dedication:

16 Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.

17 Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me (Ru.1:16-17)

GOD did not leave this wonderful dedication unrewarded. When Ruth met Boaz for the first time, he was very kind to her and allowed her to eat and glean with his maids. See their very first conversation:

10 So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

11 And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.

12 The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge" (Ru.2:10-12)

This very same thing happened in my life. Before ever meeting my husband, I had already ministered in India twelve times. My translator during my first ministry trip in India happened to be my husband's trainee! So since 1998, I heard everywhere what a wonderful prophet of God this Ezekiah Francis was, and how he had dedicated his life to serve Jesus without even marrying. When I was called to translate for him in Austria in 2003, I already had great admiration for him, but no fear or apprehensions, since I thought he would never marry and was therefore no "threat" to a single woman.

I still marvel how well God orchestrated everything! He had actually never told my husband that he should not marry; He had only said NO to each one of the many ladies that wanted to marry him, until his God-ordained Ruth appeared, all the way from Germany.

My husband had also already heard about me and my preaching ministry in Asia and South America as well as my translation ministry in Europe. Truly, it had been fully reported to him what I had done for Jesus up to that time. I often wonder... if I had not been out there in the mission field, fully busy and active for Jesus, there would have been nothing that could have been reported about me to God's prophet... or at least nothing that could have been of any interest to him.

We immediately clicked in the Spirit but we were both convinced that this was only meant to be a ministry relationship. Just like Ruth asked Boaz, I asked my husband to take me under his wing, under the spiritual covering and protection of his ministry, during my ministry trips to India.

None of us thought at that time that God would unite us in a marriage that today blesses continents. We give all glory to Jesus for His wonderful plans and guidance!

The good news is that God shows no partiality (Ac.10:34). The same can happen to you if only you dare to live fully and totally for Jesus!

Can you see it? Your God gives you the free choice. You can opt for living a life like everybody else, with human and worldly securities and recognition; or you can opt for following Jesus into a faith adventure which will at the beginning seem to make you lose everything, but which will tremendously reward you in the longer run.

I can testify of this with my own life. I chose to give up my university studies, best job opportunities and promising career. Like our father of faith Abraham, I just followed Jesus wherever I could see Him lead.

I volunteered for every opportunity to serve Him and His people, and from gleaning behind other reapers, He promoted me to be the wife of my precious, loving "Boaz", a faithful, time-proven servant of God and founder president of a huge ministry in the biggest nation on earth. Hallelujah!

Don't be deceived. Whatever you invest in God and His Kingdom will be given back to you with great dividends (Mt.10:42; Gal.6:7-10).

Well, let us go back to Ruth. This wonderful woman vehemently refused to go back to her nation and her old gods, as Orpah had done (Ru.1:15-18). If you think about it for a moment, you will see that Ruth had every reason for doubting Naomi's God. She was a Moabitess, a person who had worshipped different gods than Naomi all her life. Her mother-in-law Naomi took the death of all the male members of her family as an act of God and told the women of Bethlehem to call her Mara, which means, bitter. Why in the world should Ruth want to adhere to such a God?

And yet, her love to her mother-in-law and her sense of responsibility made her forego her nation, her compatriots and even her gods. She was willing to follow an old, impoverished, bereaved, lonely and bitter woman into a very uncertain future. What a woman!

Can you see my point? Please, don't waste even one second of your unmarried life. Live it to the full for Jesus and for others, like Ruth or like the Hebrew midwives we already studied. Did Ruth go out in search of a husband? No. She went out to cater to a desperate need and ensure her mother-in-law's survival. There was no selfish thought, no whining, no complaining, no impatience. There was just trust in the God of her mother-in-law.

And sure enough, the God of her mother-in-law stepped into action. He led her beautifully to glean in the fields of Boaz, a near relative who had the power to rescue her from her widowhood and bring her into a commanding position as owner of a huge estate.

Should he decide to marry her, the resulting children would count as her first husband's children and perpetuate his name through his inheritance (Ru.4:3-5). Boaz would not have any benefit through these children whom he would raise in another man's name. His willingness to marry Ruth in spite of this fact clearly shows his beautiful, unselfish character.

His character was proven also in another way. When he saw Ruth gleaning in his field, he commanded his workers not to disturb her and to give her an extra allowance of grain (Ru.2:8-16). When she came to him on the threshing floor, as her mother-in-law had commanded her, he again gave her food in abundance (Ru.3:15-17). How interesting!

In the Middle Ages and even beyond, young men could only marry if they had a good job and a steady income. No young woman would have thought of marrying a man who could not take care of her and her children, and no parents would have given their daughter into such uncertain hands.

Nowadays, however, we have oftentimes the tragic phenomenon of men seeking out women to take care of them. Such men are usually very handsome, very well groomed, often with very good manners and even a good general knowledge, and they are experts in seducing women. Jokes like this one often become a cruel reality to which the victims only wake up when it is already too late.

**Darling, I want to share everything with you. Your joys, your sadness, your happy moments, every single second of your life. Let us start with your ATM password first.**

Let me share with you a lesson I am right now learning from our breeding lovebirds. A dear brother presented us three males and one female. You can imagine that there was quite some rivalry going on in that little cage! The way by which the female chose her male was really intriguing to watch.

All the males tried their best to get her attention. They did that by singing nice melodies, by following her around and, if she would allow it, by grooming her. The real decision, however,

was not taken by how well the male could sing or “kiss”, that is, groom her. The winner was the male who was fastest in eating grain and fresh grass, chewing it into a gluey substance and feeding her with it!

I was very surprised about this until I could watch the couple after their young had hatched. The female would now sit most of the time on the little ones and only leave the nest for her necessities. The male was fully in charge of feeding the female who in turn would feed the young. Wow!

You should see that male fluttering around the cage, searching for food everywhere, trying his best to make me understand that he needed fresh green for his family! Sometimes he was so eager to prepare the food for his lady that he forgot all his fears and touched my fingers in his urge to feed.

I could not but think, wow, what a wonderful husband! And what a wonderful instinct God has given to these tiny birds! All the singing, jumping and petting didn't count for the female. What counted was the male's proven ability to provide for his future family.

Don't you think we should learn a lesson from these little lovebirds? If you take this one counsel to heart, you can easily avoid much heartache in the future.

## GOD'S PERSON

We have seen already some of God's criteria for a happy marriage. Let us now see another one from the life of Ruth.

Imagine her situation. She was a young widow, living all alone with her widowed mother-in-law in a foreign nation. In full obedience to her mother-in-law, she maneuvered herself into a very precarious situation: She crept secretly under a man's blanket in the middle of the night! See what happened when the man awoke, startled:

10 Then he said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich.

11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman" (Ru.3:10-11)

This shows me how diligently Ruth had kept her testimony. Boaz could say such beautiful words to a woman who crept into his bed at night! Wow! Think about it! Ruth was of such truthfulness, purity and moral clarity that Boaz simply couldn't misunderstand her! There was nothing unclean, sexy or inviting about her demeanor. There was just a childlike purity, submission and obedience to the authorities God had placed over her.

As we have seen, Boaz had no monetary benefit from this marriage, but rather loss. Yet he was so impressed by Ruth's

character that he decided to marry her nevertheless.

Is this the testimony of your life? Well, if it is not, you can ask Jesus today itself to forgive you for any sin committed and to purify you with His precious Blood (1.Jn.1:9). If you really mean it, He will take your life into His hands and create a beautiful poem out of it. Hallelujah!

**Hi, I am marrying next week. There will be a small party, only a few people will be invited. Don't bring any gift. Just bring someone to marry me.**

Well, you may laugh, but some people are so desperate to finally get married that they just accept anybody who comes along! They might even accept such methods... but let me tell you very seriously: The second-most important decision in your life is the decision for the right spouse.

What is the first decision? Well, the absolutely most important decision is of course making Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior of your life! Actually, only with Jesus you really have life, a life worth living! I very much hope you have taken this vital decision and prayed with me a little while before.

If you have not done so, please go back to the chapter THE ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION and make this first and foremost relationship perfect.

Now, how can you make sure you marry the right person? How can you go about searching your life partner?

Let me tell you my experience. My agreement with the Lord from the very beginning of my walk with Him was, "Lord Jesus, I am so happy with You, I don't need any husband. I don't want anybody to disturb my service to You. In case You ever want me to marry, You have to show it to me very clearly. I am only



willing to marry if both my husband's ministry and my ministry for You are enhanced by this marriage. I am only willing to marry a man who tells me that he doesn't want a wife for the kitchen, but for Your ministry; and I am only willing to marry a man who promises me that he will always love You more than he loves me."

This radical stand for Jesus has protected me from marrying anybody but God's wonderful and perfect choice whom He had kept for me in these eighteen years between my prayers and our marriage. Wow!

You can really trust that God will stand for those who stand for Him (1.Sa.2:30).

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## GOD'S COUNSEL

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A very intriguing real-life story about a special kind of election can be found in Genesis chapter 24. Our father of faith Abraham sent out his most trusted servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. See the interesting prayer the servant spoke:

14 Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink' - let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master (Ge.24:14)

### Kingdom election

Of course, as you well know, the young woman here can be compared to the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ, and also to each believer in particular. Abraham can be compared to Father God, the servant Eliezer to God's wonderful Holy Spirit, and Isaac to our Lord Jesus for whom the Father is preparing a Bride.

So who is chosen in the Kingdom? There is a very interesting fact that made many mighty servants of God wonder and ponder. I have heard of Reinhard Bonnke, the mighty miracle evangelist from Germany, asking the Lord, "Lord, why are You giving me this task also? You know my hands are already very full. I have already more work to do for You than I have time to accomplish it. Why don't You call somebody else for this job?"

Jesus replied to him with this principle from Mt.25:28-29:

29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away (Mt.25:29)

You can see this principle all throughout the Bible. It is not the lazy ones, the ones who are just sitting around and waiting for some job, anointing or ministry calling to fall upon them; it is the already busy ones who get called, get appointed, and get anointed!

We see this principle of God's election for example in the case of God's prophet Elisha. Elisha was a rich young man, heir of a well-situated family. Twelve yoke of oxen represented great wealth in Bible times, and he was in charge of them when the prophet Elijah passed by with the challenge to give up everything in order to follow and serve God (1.Ki.19:19-21).

Also God's deliverer Gideon was very busy when he received the call of God, and also he was a rich heir who gave up and even destroyed the family heritage (Jdg.6:11-27).

None of the disciples of Jesus was lazy when He called them to follow Him, which means, into the ministry.

### **Spouse selection**

We can see this principle very clearly in the case of Rebekah. Please get your Bible and read this intriguing true life love story in Genesis chapter 24 before you keep on reading here. As you read, remember that this was the quest for a wife for the son of Abraham, God's friend, our great father of faith.

Interestingly, Abraham didn't just say, "Ok, I am a man of faith. I will just trust God that He will do everything perfectly

according to His will." No way! Abraham had clear ideas - and it was not the ideas many parents have today! Abraham did not ask for beauty, status, education or riches. See what he asked for:

2 So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh,

3 and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell;

4 but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

5 And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?"

6 But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there.

7 The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

8 And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there" (Ge.24:2-8)

Abraham had a very clear spiritual vision and goal. He knew his son should never marry a heathen woman, but only a believer in his God (2.Cor.6:14-16). He knew his son had to stay in Canaan because God had promised to give it to him and to his

descendants. He knew it would have to be a supernatural miracle to find the right person. And he knew his God would be faithful and do the rest once Abraham had set things on the right path.

This is what people of faith will do. They will keep God's Word and vision for their life before their eyes. They will make sure they search only in the right places, which is only among believers. And then they will entrust the whole matter into God's mighty, loving hands.

Let me add one thought here. Of course, Abraham's family members were not believers but idol worshippers. That is the reason why God had to take Abraham out of his country, his family and his father's house (Ge.12:1).

Yet God who knows the end from the beginning knew that Rebekah would easily submit to Abraham's and Isaac's God, and that even her family was a god-fearing family (Ge.24:50). So compared to the cursed Canaanites among whom Abraham was living, they were extremely much better and purer in their morals and culture (Ge.9:25).

Now please, don't take this as an excuse for wanting to marry some half-believer. Rebekah was the closest thing to a God-fearing woman you could get in that time. Nowadays, however, you have millions of believers to allow God to select from! So lay the matter into His hand and relax!

Do you remember the interesting prayer Abraham's servant prayed? He asked specifically,

14 Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink' - let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master (Ge.24:14)

What was the criterion for choosing a wife for the master's son? Well, this servant fully intended to make her WORK - and not just an easy, lady-like work! To me, the most interesting point is that the servant was not satisfied with her just obediently doing what he asked her to do. He was not even satisfied with her fully finishing the job he had given her. He wanted her to do MORE, and he wanted her to do it out of her OWN initiative! He wanted a person who would see the need and who would be willing to work very hard to solve the problem. Wow!

Interestingly, in Indian culture the pretender's entire family comes to the intended future wife's house after previous talks and arrangements between both parents. In most cases, the two youngsters have not even met but only seen a picture and the biodata of the other person.

The girl in question has to make tea, prepare some snacks, and serve the family of the future "might-be" husband. In some families, she is even required to sing and dance to show her good education and talents. After this, she might be allowed to speak a few words with the young man who is pretending her.

In more modern-minded families, both youngsters have a say and can refuse the person if they are not happy with what they saw on this occasion. In other families, especially girls are still forced to marry the boy the family selects. I know also of boys forced to marry a girl they feel no attraction toward, just based on her studies, financial position or other merits their parents like.

The remaining marriage arrangements are typically done by the families with very little involvement of the bride and groom. These might be allowed to speak on the phone and maybe even to meet in the presence of others to get to know each other and to prepare for marriage. In Pentecostal circles, still today the holiest thing is to not speak a word to each other before marriage. Wow.

It sounds to me quite similar to the story of Isaac and

Rebekah! Interestingly, such “arranged marriages” often work better and have fewer divorces than the so-called “love marriages”. Could it be because the parents know better what is good for their children than what aroused and over-active hormones might tell them? Anyway, an important criterion for selecting the bride is her performance as well as her willingness and ability to work.

Also notice the end of servant Eliezer’s prayer. He said, “By this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master” (Ge.24:14). Why, what did this hard work have to do with kindness? Well, a diligent, hard-working person who can not only see a need but also fill the gap and immediately jump in to do the job will always be a tremendous blessing to any master! So bringing him such a wife would be a very definite act of kindness.

### **Life perfection**

In my own life, this was the case. Automatically, the love of God poured out into my heart just reached out to everything and everybody around me (Ro.5:5). The shy, self-centered and self-conscious young woman I had been was transformed into a loving, caring person who was willing to work and labor hard for the good of others. Before my salvation, I used to waste my precious life time watching TV, reading novels and the like. Right from my salvation, however, the burning desire to help others experience the great miracle of salvation I had received launched this “couch-potato” into a very active lifestyle.

I was actually always on the look-out for jobs to do for my Jesus. For years I worked in different helping ministries until finally the Lord promoted me into my own 5-fold-ministry calling. Till today, the servants of God I had been translating and organizing meetings for, driving around, feeding or blessing

with any other kind of help remember me with love and mention my life as an example for others to follow. What a blessing to be blessed by such mighty men and women of God!

Somehow, I would immediately see needs and vacancies that needed to be filled, and I would just jump in without counting what it would cost me in terms of my privacy, my comfort, my time, or my money. I would just pray, “Lord, I want to do this! Can I do it?” I will never forget how during one of these prayers, I heard my Heavenly Father just laugh at me! In a very pleased, loving tone of voice, He called me, “My jumping instrument”!

The same moment, He showed me a vision of an operation theater with a special table on which all the instruments required for the operation were prepared, fully sterilized and ready for use. All of them were laid out there quietly and normally; only one of them was jumping up and down, shouting, “I want to, I want to, PLEASE use ME!!!” This used to be my attitude concerning any need in God’s Kingdom, be it financial, physical or in any other area. Till today I can feel the joy and even gratitude of the Lord when He laughed at my burning desire to serve Him.

In my great love for Jesus, one day I went to my pastors and told them that I had some free time and would love to do any work they could find for me to do in the church, like cleaning, doing household chores for sick members, or whatever was needed. This was a church of over 300 members at that time. I still remember my great dismay and disappointment when my pastors couldn’t find any work for me to do. Sadly, soon afterwards both these pastors were dismissed by the church for their lack of vision and passion for God’s Kingdom. The church is now struggling for survival with no more than fifty or sixty believers under a new interim pastor.

Pastors, please find opportunities for your members to serve Jesus - and if no such opportunities exist, create them! Jesus will be very pleased with you when you prepare the way for believers to step into their calling by allowing them to do some small chores in the house of God.

Many callings can never start budding because no opportunities for service are given to willing believers. Of course, the opposite also exists. Many good pastors search desperately for believers who would be willing to sacrifice some of their precious time to serve in the church, but they find nobody.

I am fully convinced that many precious callings of God are wasted while the called people languish in boring, unfruitful lives. What is the reason? It is definitely not God's fault. Our Lord Jesus said clearly, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt.22:14). Is it that God didn't call enough people to get this world saved long ago? No way!!!

Our God is an "interactive" God. He calls you, and then He eagerly waits for your response. His plans and ambitions for your life are unimaginably glorious - but did you know that YOU can "abort your calling" any step of the way??? Your God looks deep inside. He looks at your heart and your motivations (1.Chr.29:17; Tit.1:5-11; 1.Pe.5:2-3).

Two thousand years ago already, our Lord Jesus lamented, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Mt.9:37; Lk.10:2). Can you see it? Not the waiters and wonderers are few; not the lazy and crazy are few; not the critics and complainers are few; not the scribes and bribes are few; not the Pharisees and Sadducees are few; the LOVERS and LABORERS are few (Lk.10:27)!!!

### Future projection

Ok, let's get back to our Bibles. Please note that this was not just any marriage proposal. This was the woman who would be the mother of Jacob, the supplanter, who would be transformed into God's great patriarch Israel once he had a real encounter with God (Ge.32:24-30). This young girl was to become the mother of the man from whom the twelve tribes of Israel would stem! Wow!!!

Please understand: If you want your life and your posterity to count for something in this world, you must chose your life partner very carefully.

Let us read meticulously what the Bible says. I have highlighted some words for your special attention.

14 "Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink' - let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."

15 And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder.

16 Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up.

17 And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher."

18 So she said, "Drink, **my lord**." Then she **quickly** let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink.

19 And when she had finished giving him a drink, **she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.”**

20 Then she **quickly** emptied her pitcher into the trough, **ran** back to the well to draw water, and **drew for all his camels.**

21 And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

22 So it was, **when the camels had finished drinking,** that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels of gold... (Ge.24:14-22)

Can you see it? Her attitude was respectful, helpful and pleasant. She applied herself fully to this task of helping a stranger. She ran, gave the water quickly, worked for a stranger's animals without any thought of self or recompense, and didn't stop until even the animals were fully satisfied. Wow! What an example to follow! What a challenge!

I have wondered many times what would have happened to Rebekah and also to Isaac if she had become tired and given up in the midst of her self-imposed task. Please note that Eliezar didn't jump for joy or come to conclusions when Rebekah started drawing water for the camels. Eliezar actually didn't even believe in her promise (Ge.24:19)!

How interesting! It seems he already had a glimpse of our modern Christianity where we are so quick with our words and easily promise this and that, all too often without a real intention to fulfill it. It seems to me that we have not taken seriously the words of our Lord Jesus and His earthly brother James who warned us so clearly, “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’

‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one” and “But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your ‘Yes,’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No,’ lest you fall into judgment” (Mt.5:37; Jas.5:12).

Eliezar was not willing to take for his master a wife who would allow anything from the evil one, the devil, in her life. He was not willing to take a person who would fall into judgment. He wanted an honest, trustworthy wife as the future mother of his master's children! So Eliezar stood and watched silently until she had really and completely fulfilled her promise. Only when he was fully convinced of her truthfulness, integrity and ability, he took out the gifts and revealed his godly intentions.

Think about it. How many modern youth, both boys and girls, would just see “the man” or “the woman” and try their best to impress and entice them. How many would seek to start a conversation or throw some longing or promising looks at the other person.

Imagine Rebekah's situation. Here was a stranger, a rich man with many camels, standing before a young woman in marriageable age. How many thoughts could have crossed her mind...

Yet, can you see which thought prevailed in Rebekah? It was the concern for the suffering - in this case, for the thirsty camels! Wow! She didn't look for her own benefit. She had an eye and a heart of compassion even for the animals, knowing that they, too, are God's creation. Have you ever noticed that God's Word connects your behavior towards animals with your righteousness? No? See here:

10 A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel (Pr.12:10)

Wow! In just these few verses of Genesis chapter 24, your

# 10

## WORLDLY COUNSEL

There are, however, some other counsels how to find the right spouse, like this one:

**Boy to Gym coach: I want to impress this cute girl I'm going to meet in three days. Which machine should I use? Coach: Use the ATM machine**

There is something deep inside a human being that wants to impress others, to be admired, to be the hero. Unfortunately, this desire is most prevalent during the period of selecting a marriage partner.

### Money attraction

Think about it! If you pretend to be or to have something you are not or you don't have, how will you be able to keep up this lie for the rest of your life?

The painful moment of truth will come - be it when your beautiful body-builder's body falls sick, or be it when your bank account is empty. A person you attracted by these things will most probably leave you when you are no longer able to provide what they want. Beware!

Unfortunately, there are people who follow the advice from this joke and get themselves head over heels into debts which may take years to pay off. What a bad start for a marriage!

## Sex appeal

I will never forget a counsel I received years ago from the pastor of one of the biggest churches in Colombia, South America. I was at that time his translator in a big conference, and he sincerely wanted to help me and do me good. His counsel was: "Sister, please stop dressing like your own grandmother. If you ever want to get married, you should change your style and use some sex appeal." Wow!!! I didn't want to believe my ears that such a famous man of God could give a young lady such a counsel!

Without considering the consequences, I immediately hit back, "No way! Never! The kind of men I could attract with sex appeal would never be the kind of man I would be willing to marry. I prefer to stay alone for the rest of my life than to try to catch a husband by sex appeal."

I stayed true to this decision for all these years, and in His perfect time, God Himself blessed me with a wonderful, loving, wise, anointed, pure and holy man of God. Hallelujah!

You can do the same. Don't bow to anything or anybody. Simply stay true to your godly principles, and you will never go wrong.

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## HUMAN COUNSEL

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**Girls, marry veterans... They know how to make their beds, wash their clothes, cook their meals, and they are already used to obeying orders.**

There are many guidelines and counsels available everywhere concerning the selection of a spouse, and many of them can just lead you right into disaster if you follow them. Praise God, you have His user's manual, His eternal Word, in our hands. You need not be misled into marrying a person that is not God's best choice for your life! Hallelujah!

### **Pseudo-“scientific” reasons**

Just to show you the outrageous kinds of counsel people can give a young person, let me tell you one more incident from my own life. As a university student before my salvation, I spent my vacations in Spain, studying the language and my university textbooks while earning some money making leather handbags. I had a British friend who had married a Spaniard and was living in Spain permanently. One day I complained about a pimple in my face. Her husband seriously suggested I find a boyfriend and have some sex since this would improve my skin condition!!!

What a horror! What scientific nonsense! How the devil tried to spoil my mind! How much God protected me in all these years! Thank You, Jesus!!!

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## GODLY LEADERS' COUNSEL

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I hope from all this you have clearly seen that the very best source for finding the right spouse is God's Word. There are, however, some people whose counsel you should heed since they were set by God as authorities over your life. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews gives us a wonderful counsel:

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the Word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct (Heb. 13:7)

Me and my dear husband, we love to remember and learn from “successful” servants of God whose faith we can safely follow because their conduct brought godly results.

### **Profit for you**

There is a very powerful truth from God's Word:

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you (Heb. 13:17)

Wow! Obeying and being submissive with joy is actually profitable for you! Can you see it? It is profitable not for them, but for YOU! Wow. Prophet Samuel's mother Hanna and King David are great examples of this (1.Sa.1-3; 1.Sa.24). You can really commit your soul to your faithful Creator who is the



Shepherd and Overseer of your soul (1.Pe.4:19; 1.Pe.2:25). He will make sure that His will is done in your life if you humbly accept His wisdom and trust His action.

I have seen powerful proofs of this in my own life again and again. God stands for those who stand for Him, and He protects those who hold fast to His Word and truth. Hallelujah!

### **Safety for you**

Living in India, I had much opportunity to study a very interesting phenomenon. This nation still knows arranged marriages where the parents have the main say in choosing the spouse for their child. Interestingly, these arranged marriages are normally more peaceful and in the longer run more successful than the so-called “love marriages”. What could be the reason?

One reason could very well be that your parents know you better than you know yourself, especially when hormones run wild and first love clouds your discernment. At a young age, people normally choose according to the present situation without thinking much ahead. They think, if we are happy and love each other now, why should our relationship ever get into trouble? They don't consider how the other person will be able to withstand hardship like financial problems, sickness, trouble with the children or other problems that might arise in life.

All too often, decisions are taken based on the ready availability of money and an attractive job that provides a good social status at present. Unfortunately, the jokes about young men “catching” young girls with an attractive sports car or cabriolet are all too true! Beauty and physical attraction are other important factors that sometimes lead people into wrong choices. But see what our wise God says in His eternal counsel:

Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised (Pr.31:30)

Dear brother, if you are on the lookout for a wife, first of all, get your Bible out! Your God has dedicated almost an entire chapter to the description of a virtuous wife, as well as various chapters on the kind of women you should run from as fast as you can! You can read for yourself all the warnings in Proverbs chapters five to seven and again in chapter 9:13-18 as well as in many other places.

### **Godliness for you**

Of course, the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31 is an adult, a mature woman in her rightful position as the wife of a man who gives her freedom to use her gifts and talents; but even in a young girl you can already discern the signs of future greatness or mediocrity.

The most important question you have to ask yourself about the person you consider marrying is this: Does he or she fear the Lord? As the Bible repeatedly tells us, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps.111:10; Pr.9:10).

A person who really fears the Lord Jesus will never hurt you because he or she will know that hurting you means hurting God. See this wonderful word:

13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil. Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate (Pr.8:13)

Now imagine having a spouse who fears the Lord. He or she will hate and shun all evil! He or she will never arrogantly suppress you. What a blessing! You don't need to worry or fear anything. Your spouse will automatically hate anything that

could bring pain and destruction to your marriage, your family, your very life! Proverbs 16:6 says it again: “In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil.” And see this:

The fear of the LORD leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction. He will not be visited with evil (Pr.19:23)

Life and satisfaction will be yours if you and your spouse fear the Lord, and no evil can even come near your dwelling (Ps.91:10). What a secure, peaceful life for your future family! What a lifelong reward for choosing a spouse who puts God first and is pleasing in God’s eyes!

Of course, fearing God does not mean being afraid of God; it means to reverence, to honor and to obey God. It just means to want to make God always happy. By aspiring to do that, this person will automatically make people happy. The blessings of the fear of the Lord are really a great and beautiful mystery.

5 Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

6 Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you. Love her, and she will keep you.

7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.

8 Exalt her, and she will promote you. She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.

9 She will place on your head an ornament of grace. A crown of glory she will deliver to you.

10 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life will be many.

11 I have taught you in the way of wisdom. I have led you in right paths.

12 When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, and when you run, you will not stumble.

13 Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go. Keep her, for she is your life (Pr.4:5-13)

A person who fears the Lord will also have tremendous wisdom to deal with each and every situation, since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

A person who fears the Lord will never arrogantly or obnoxiously insist in his or her ways. He or she will be easily guided by God Himself and thus protected from taking wrong steps. To those who desire to do His will, He will definitely show the right way.

If you marry a person who fears the Lord, you will never have to fight for your right or your opinion. You can just entrust the matter into the loving hands of Jesus, knowing that your spouse will definitely seek Him about the matter and therefore do His perfect will.

What a wonderful, most secure life in God’s perfect will and ways you will have if you marry a person who fears the Lord! Wow!

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## YOUR BRAIN'S COUNSEL

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Another reason for wrong choices in selecting a marriage partner is purely scientific. The human brain keeps developing throughout life and can be improved at any age through brain exercise, physical exercise, enough uninterrupted sleep, a proper diet and other factors.

For more details, please see my book “How to maximize your brain”, available at [www.ezekiahfrancis.org](http://www.ezekiahfrancis.org).

### Brain development

The final anatomic structure, however, is fully reached only around the age of twenty-four. Before that, different regions of the brain develop at different speeds. Interestingly, the regions responsible for emotional enjoyment, sound, sight, excitement and speed (like in driving) are almost fully developed already during teenage, while the regions responsible for intellectual reasoning and decision-making are the last ones to be fully developed.

This clearly explains why parents and authority figures should take their protective roles very much to heart. Prayer and godly counsel are the most important things you can give to a young person to ensure a bright future for them. Since the emotional areas of the brain are much more developed than the reasoning areas, young people can easily make a big mistake by choosing a life partner for all the wrong reasons.

### Brain submission

Biblical submission under godly leadership is therefore a great blessing and protection, especially for a young person. Pastors and parents are the first ones to ask for prayer to make sure this person is the right one for you to marry. Please never think you are too spiritual, too mature or too anointed to need anybody's counsel. Actively submit your brain to obey those authorities God set over you for your own benefit. The Bible says very clearly and repeatedly that in the multitude of counselors, there is safety, and plans get established (Pr. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6).

My dear husband had been in God's active ministry for over 40 years and leading his own ministry for over 20 years when his counselors suddenly and unanimously started telling him that God wanted him to get married. He immediately submitted the whole matter to God, his physical parents and his board of counselors. What a wonderful feeling of safety it was for both of us to know that seasoned servants of God were praying for us and that they all felt our marriage was God's perfect plan for our lives!

Now you might say, “Sister, you were lucky, but I don't have any spiritual people I could submit to. My parents are unbelievers and have very selfish motives concerning my marriage”. Well, that may be the case, but did you know that God is far above all these things? If you submit your life into His hands and decide to abide by His laws, He will turn the hearts of people to miraculously do His will!

### Brain decision

You have some wonderful examples in God's Word where people decided to submit to very ungodly leaders. For example, David submitted to Saul after he was already anointed king in

Saul's place, and after God's Spirit had departed from Saul and he was plagued by an evil spirit.

David knew the situation very well since he was the one playing the harp with his hands to bring relief to Saul from that evil spirit. David also knew that he was anointed in Saul's place. Yet even then, he trembled to lay his hand on God's anointed (1.Sa.24). David submitted to a very ungodly leadership, and God honored him for it.

Another person who decided against her brain's counsel to submit is Hannah, the mother of God's great prophet Samuel. She submitted to Eli, even when his spiritual discernment was totally wrong and he mistook her for a drunkard. She respected and honored him anyway and reaped the reward of his blessing. The outcome was a miracle child that became God's mouthpiece for the entire nation (1.Sa.1-3). Wow!

You can see here that the spiritual standard of the person over you is not what counts; what matters is your heart before God and your willingness to obey Him and His ways.

So please, don't let your brain take you out of the blessing of submission to leadership God has planned for your life! Decide God's way!

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## YOUR EMOTIONS' COUNSEL

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Again another reason for selecting the wrong person lies in people's past.

### **Unfulfilled emotions**

If a young person didn't receive enough parental love, especially a father's love, trust and encouragement, he or she will be just starving for some affirmation and recognition. Such youth are in great danger of falling prey to the first person showing any interest in them, not even necessarily real love and affection. How many tragic examples we have seen where young girls fall prey to pimps and are forced and even sold into prostitution after a few days or weeks of feigned romance!

### **Idolatrous emotions**

If you are on the lookout for a spouse, please make very sure you yourself have deep roots in the love of God. Be rooted and grounded in His love (Eph.3:14-19). Without these roots, you may just sway with any wind or even breeze and be blown away by any kind of emotional tornado.

Also make sure the person you are considering to marry has stable roots in God's love. If not, you will experience all the turmoil and tortures of a demanding, demeaning, devilish behavior once you are married.

## Unhealed emotions

More dangerous even are past hurts and the reactions to hurts and offenses you learned in your parents' home. Since you grew up there, whatever happened there will seem normal to you, and you will automatically tend to select a spouse that will fit into the lifestyle you learned at home. If that lifestyle was not a Bible-based, Christian lifestyle, you are set up for disaster or at least many problems in your future marriage.

## Rebellious emotions

On the other hand, some youth consciously rebel against everything and anything they saw in their parents' home. This is still more dangerous, since there is a spiritual law that will come into action and make sure they will become exactly what they used to attack so vehemently - and maybe even worse than what they despised in their parents. Remember, Jesus said,

37 Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven (Lk.6:37)

and

1 Judge not, that you be not judged.

2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you (Mt.7:1-2)

If you fail to consciously forgive and release your family members and especially your parents from your judgment, you are really in danger. So please make sure you are at peace with your past and the people in it before you venture out into your future.

## Delivered emotions

Take time to pray and ask God's Holy Spirit to show you your own heart. You will be surprised at all the old hurts, long forgotten vows and other things He will show you.

Consciously confess any sin He shows you. If needed, ask forgiveness and make peace with your family members. At least in your prayer closet, speak out aloud that you release them from your judgment and bless them.

You will be surprised at the spiritual difference this simple exercise will make in your life. It cuts off inroads the enemy of your soul was hoping to use to spoil your life and calling by making you marry the wrong person. Hallelujah!

I trust you would have understood by now that you shouldn't trust your feelings, ideas, understanding and discernments alone.

You really need to humbly ask God for His will, and you do well to listen to godly counsel concerning this second most important decision of your lifetime.

Yet there are still some more dangerous counsels to avoid.

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## YOUR HORMONES' COUNSEL

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For me as a Master of Science in Biology, a whole new world is opening up through our “self-appointed watchmen”, a herd of stray dogs, here in our “Center of Healing for the Nations” in rural India.

### Animal hormones

When our only female comes into her mating season, her body starts producing a scent that proves to be irresistible to male dogs miles around. All of a sudden, dogs appear from everywhere, fighting, crying, moaning, begging for her favors and behaving like totally crazy.

Once the season is over and her hormone-induced “sexy scent” subsides, all dogs come back to their normal, sleepy mood and once again show interest only in food. We are always awe-struck at this obvious display of the power of hormones.

It fills us with compassion and understanding for our young people who are being bombarded with implicit pictures and sexy videos from all sides. Life in this age is absolutely not easy!

### Human hormones

But let me give you some good news here. Contrary to popular belief and teaching, you are NOT an animal! You have

NOT evolved from a monkey. You are created in the image and likeness of GOD Almighty (Ge.1:26)!

Even if you have not yet made Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior of your life, you are created in God’s image and have been given by God the tremendous gift of a free will.

You can choose your actions and control your behavior. You don’t need to become enslaved to your body functions. You CAN control your hormones! You don’t need to run around and act like a crazy dog! You don’t need to be misled by your eyes, ears or nose and run after the “sexiest” male or female you can find. You can use your brain to say no to your hormones that want to dictate your behavior.

### Super-human hormones

If you are a born-again believer, of course, you have tremendous benefits compared to a non-regenerate person. Your born-spirit can take control of your soul and body! You have been given power over each and every unclean spirit (Lk.10:19).

You can confess any sin, even in your mind and imaginations, turn away from it and even cast out any demon that got access into your life through sinful activities (Mt.5:28; 1.Jn.1:9; Mk.16:17-20).

You CAN live a healthy, holy, happy life while you are waiting for Mr. or Mrs. Right, and you CAN expect and experience fulfillment and heavenly bliss later on with your one and only God-given spouse!

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## YOUR BODY'S COUNSEL

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Somebody said,

**Marriage and love are purely a matter of chemistry. That's why the wife treats the husband like toxic waste.**

If you allow your physical instincts to select your spouse, you might be up for some surprises. Did you know that your body actually “speaks” to your brain to release chemicals that make you feel attracted to specific persons and repelled by others? How does this work, and what is the purpose?

I recently saw a very interesting report about some scientific experiments conducted with college students. Scientists wanted to find out how people select their marriage partner as compared to a person for a sensual adventure.

### Your eyes' counsel

One experiment was based on body shape. Young men were shown some very simple pencil drawings of women. In each drawing, the size and proportion of different body parts like breasts, hips, thighs and waist were slightly different. Interestingly, the young men showed different preferences for a so-called “adventure” than for a serious lifetime commitment.

The typical sex symbols that are so much emphasized in the media were chosen for a fleeting sex encounter; for a wife,

however, these young men preferred exactly the body shape that has proven to be the most conducive for child-bearing and child-rearing. How interesting!

Let's take this a little further. Have you ever wondered why fashion dictates clothing preferences in a way that seeks to induce sexual desire and foster sex adventures? God's Word rightly says,

18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one (1.Jn.5:18-19)

The flow of this world, controlled by satan, the prince of the power of the air, tries to attack God by spoiling His beloved children, the apple of His eye (2.Cor.4:4; Eph.2:2; Dt.32:10).

Will you allow satan this victory? Will you use fashion to display your body as a sex object? Or will you keep your beauty and attractive attributes concealed for the one spouse your God has prepared for you?

What a difference it will make if you go into marriage pure and undefiled, to be discovered and delighted in only by the person who already committed to stay with you for the rest of your life! Think about it...

You may say, “But all do it... all expose their bodies... all use their sex appeal and have boyfriends and girlfriends... I would look so odd and be mocked by all my friends!” True... you probably will be mocked... but are these people who mock you really FRIENDS? Do they really want your best? Do they even KNOW what is best for you???

Your best is definitely to live in a close friendship and loving relationship with your Creator who knows best what is best for you. He promises,

4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart (Ps.37:4)

Don't worry! He SHALL give you the desires of your heart! He will NOT break your heart with short-lived adventures like your "friends" want you to experience. You will NOT miss out on any good thing if you decide to obey God more than men and the dictates of culture and society.

Well... you still need more encouragement to obey God? See this:

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (Jas.4:4)

Why not chose to keep God as your best friend, even at the risk of looking a little odd in today's society? You can dress in a way that doesn't tempt the opposite sex to see you as a sex object. You can be beautiful and holy at the same time.

Actually, holiness is what gives you true beauty and attracts the right kind of people to you (1.Chr.16:29; 2.Chr.20:21; Ps.29:2; 96:9; 1.Pe.3:3-4)!

### **Your nose's counsel**

Another experiment was conducted to test if smell has anything to do with partner selection. In German language, for example, we have the expression "I can't smell him/her" for the English idiom "I can't stand him". In African tribes and other

cultures, people are checked for their character by their body smell. When greeting somebody with a hug or cheek kiss, each partner deeply inhales the body odor of the other person. A person who covers up their body odor by using perfumes or deodorant seems deeply suspicious to such cultures since they conclude such a person must have some dark secret he or she is trying to hide!

Scientists therefore conducted another experiment in which they tested the selection mechanisms by smell preferences. College girls were given T-Shirts young men had worn during a vigorous work-out. By the smell of the sweat, the girls had to decide which young man they would be most interested in getting to know.

Here again, the result was astonishing. With great precision, the girls selected the men whose immune systems differed most strongly from their own immune systems.

What does that mean? Well, through the combination of these so very different parental immune systems in the child, an inbuilt protection against a broader spectrum of diseases is achieved. What a wonderful God we serve!

The scientists concluded, therefore, that in order to guarantee the best chance of survival and health for the future offspring, God had put some hitherto undiscovered instinct into both sexes to choose the most promising person in terms of promoting and protecting future generations. Wow!



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## YOUR CREATOR'S COUNSEL

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This is fully in line with God's creation order from the very beginning where God blessed Adam and Eve to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth (Ge. 1:28). This desire of God is again confirmed in the Book of Malachi, where God speaks through His prophet that God makes husband and wife One because He seeks godly offspring (Mal. 2:15). And of course, God wants this offspring to be as healthy and strong as can be!

Isn't this interesting? God's thoughts and priorities are really very different from ours, as He so rightly said (Isa. 55:8-9).

In the Western world, people want their comfort, their travels, their big house and their big car. Many of them see children as a nuisance, and it can even be difficult to rent a house if you have more than one or two children. In many nations, families with four or more children are considered "anti-social".

How much have we strayed from God's eternal plan and purpose! See His opinion about children:

3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.

4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth.

5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate (Ps. 127:3-5)

So if you are looking for a spouse, ask yourself these very important questions:

- Could I and would I like to rear children with this person?
- What kind of a father or mother would this person be?
- What are his or her priorities in life?
- Will he or she be diligent enough to work and support a family all throughout life?
- What kind of values would this person install in my children?
- Could I raise my children in a godly way if this person were my spouse?

God will honor you for your desire to obey His Word and His ways, and He will definitely guide you to the right spouse for your life.

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## WANT MORE?

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What if for any reason you want to marry for the second time?

**There are people who compare marriage with the Army. Why? Well, they say, everybody complains about it, but a surprisingly high number re-enlists!**

The most careful preparation must be done when this marriage is a second marriage.

### **Agonizing the past**

The death of a spouse always creates deep pain, even trauma, in a person. Before considering to remarry, make sure you prayed through your grief and are free in your spirit and in your emotions.

You can find out your level of freedom by checking how easily you can talk about your spouse's life and also about his or her death.

### **Glorifying the past**

A big problem in widows or widowers remarrying is that they can easily fall prey to the temptation of glorifying the memory of their deceased spouse. This leads to the dangerous conclusion that the new spouse can't do anything as well as the

late one did. Such an attitude can lead to tremendous suffering on both sides.

You need to cut your soul ties to your ex-spouse to ensure you are free for the new spouse God is giving you. For more information on this subject, please refer to my book "How to break ungodly soul ties", available at [www.ezekiahfrancis.org](http://www.ezekiahfrancis.org).

### **Holding on to the past**

If your or your future spouse's former marriage ended in a divorce and you insist in remarrying, please make very sure that both you and your future spouse really worked through the whole process of forgiving, releasing and blessing the ex-spouse.

Also in such cases, the breaking of soul ties is absolutely vital because with a soul tie in place, you would be affected emotionally, mentally and even spiritually by what that ex-partner is doing.

This does not only refer to your ex-partner. Through your future spouse's soul tie, even you would be affected by your spouse's ex-partner's actions.

### **Demonizing the past**

Another reason why remarriage after a divorce is so difficult is that there are always reasons for a divorce, and they normally include both parties. There are very few cases where the blame is totally on one side.

Even in the case of adultery, there is normally first a feeling of being neglected, despised at least or disrespected that opens the door to even consider another person than the own spouse.

Without a deep repentance, healing and cleansing (both spiritually and emotionally), you will just drag into the next marriage all the things that caused your first marriage to fail.

Our wise God gives a good reason why He hates divorce: He states, “For it covers one’s garment with violence” (Mal.2:16). A divorce is never a peaceful act of two people simply walking away from each other. There is usually quite a long process of hurts, fights and reconciliations before a couple takes the decision to divorce, normally because they have lost all hope of ever being able to live together peacefully and lovingly.

A divorce brings out the worst in both partners. I have heard many people confess they never knew that they had so much anger, hatred, aggression and even violence inside. Somebody said very truly, “Rejected love turns into the greatest hatred”. Only the forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ can wash away all these horrible hurts and memories.

### **Suffering the past**

A divorce is always a tragic and extremely painful process that leaves both parties devastated and with a very deep insecurity inside. Questions like, “Why did he/she do this to me? How could he/she reject me for this other person?” actually all have the same deep root. It is the torturing and tormenting question, “What is wrong with me?” Thankfully, many have found Jesus as their Savior in this deep despair of a divorce.

### **Understanding the past**

Please never forget, however: Your loving God never wanted you to have to go through all this pain and trauma. It happened to you because you didn’t know or didn’t heed His

counsel. Of course, being the loving God that He is, He has already given the antidote and protection against divorce thousands of years ago through His prophet Malachi:

16 “For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one’s garment with violence,” says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously” (Mal.2:16)

You didn’t heed to your spirit. Somewhere along the way, you listened to your mind and emotions and reacted out of impulse. This is what brought you into this tragic situation. So please, never blame your God for it. His plans for you are always only for good, never for evil (Jer.29:11).

### **Benefitting of the past**

Maybe the damage was done long before, and maybe you became a believer in Jesus during that time of heart-break and heart-searching.

Let me encourage you. You will not remain alone. You will have a marriage - a very glorious one without any danger of hurts and misunderstandings. What is more, there will never ever be any more divorce! Sounds good?

Well, you are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ - and you are not only invited as a guest, you are invited to be the glorious Bride! You can read all about it in your Bible (Rev.19).

### **Forgiving the past**

Now I hear you say, “Good joke! But what about my life on this earth? Do I have to remain alone?” Luckily, the answer is no!

You can definitely remarry! The ideal would be for you to start praying right now for God to help you conquer once again the heart of your own ex-wife or ex-husband!

I have met couples that had divorced and after some time married again. What a glorious celebration of the victory of Jesus and of the defeat of Satan, the great destroyer! Well, with your God, all things are possible. So please, make sure you forgive and bless whoever hurt you, and never give up hope for a perfect reconciliation.

I know you are very hurt after a divorce and would prefer to find your happiness with another person. I know it is very difficult for you to imagine marrying the same person all over again. There will be terrible fears and apprehensions and an understandable worry that you might just get into all the same problems all over again.

Let me encourage you, however. I once had a man tell me, “Only after losing my wife, I understood her real value. I have learnt many things about women and their needs after this painful separation. If only I could get her back, I would never again treat her so carelessly!”

There is a very good chance that you both have learned to value each other much more than ever before. None of you will ever again take your spouse for granted. What an opportunity for a healthy, respectful relationship!

### **Letting the past be past**

In their pain and desolation, many people reach out to Jesus after a divorce. Meeting Him and falling in love with Him is the best thing that could ever happen to anybody. Being love personified, Jesus will definitely heal every hurt and make all things new, including the long-lost love in that failed marriage

(Ps.23:3; 1.Jn.4:4; Rev.21:5). Yes, He is really the God with whom nothing is impossible (Lk.1:37).

Let your past be past. Let past hurts be past. Let past expectations be past. Did you know that you can “condition” a person, “bind” a person into a certain behavior, just by your expectation that he/she will “always” do this and “always” be like this?

Remember, according to your faith it shall be done to you! So forgive and release! That gives that person a chance to change (Jn.20:23; 2.Cor.2:10-11). You might be very surprised at the change that person is suddenly able to experience!

I would strongly encourage you to pray and give another chance to your own ex-spouse. I can hear you say, “What? Another chance? Sister, you have no idea how many chances I have already given him/her!”

Well, that may be true, but does it amount to the standard our Lord Jesus set before us which is seventy times seven, and starting to count from zero each day (Mt.18:21-22)??? Think about it... and also think about the cruel consequences you yourself would have to face if you don't forgive your offender from your heart (Mt.18:35)!

Let me ask you one more question. Have you ever noticed that children always want their biological father or mother back? No child will happily and voluntarily accept another man or woman as a parent. It always takes much time, patience and endurance to convince children to accept such a situation, and even if they do, life together tends to be a real challenge.

Do you remember how our Lord Jesus told His disciples,

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter

the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt.18:3)!!

Don't you think this unanimous reaction of children all over the world is a clear indication of the design of God's Kingdom?

So please, don't give up on your marriage too easily, even if you are already divorced. I have heard of many marriages restored through the prayers of small, innocent children asking God to bring their mom or their dad back.

O yes, we serve a God of miracles, and

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes (Pr.21:1)

Somebody said, "As long as there is life, there is hope". How true...

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## NOW WHAT?

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Well, I pray and believe that this book helped you to discard any wrong candidate. I pray you found out whether that person you are thinking about is or is not qualified to become your spouse.

If he or she is not, don't worry. It is not that difficult to get that person out of your mind. Simply direct your mind toward God and His heavenly world (Col.3:1-3). Your life will be hidden with Christ in God, hidden from any wolves in sheep clothing that would want to destroy your life.

Then happily wait for God's chosen one, that very best friend and lover God has planned and prepared for you.

Don't forget: You won't find him or her in a disco, in a pub or in any worldly entertainment. The right one for you will be working in God's harvest field, waiting and praying for a faithful, God-loving and God-fearing spouse like you!

So rise up and get busy for Jesus!

Remember, as you build HIS House, HE will build your house.

## Let's keep in touch

You might still have some questions I didn't deal in this book. I would be interested in knowing your questions and happy to answer them in my next book.

**Please feel free to contact us at:**

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